

Siamanto

Poems of Siamanto



eMatenadaran.

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Аннотация

Siamanto was a pioneer in Armenian poetry. His themes were very dark and dealt extensively with death, torture, loss, misery, and sorrow. He recounted scenes of massacres, executions by hanging, bloody streets, pillaged villages, etc.; in other words, they dealt with the slaughter of Armenian men and women. The suffering of the people was continually tormenting him in turn. He spent many sleepless nights thinking about those who perished. Writing about their fate was his way of coping with the pain and making sure they were not killed in silence. Life for the Armenians was bleak under Ottoman rule and Siamanto's works described that fact of life very well. However, his poems and writings go beyond the pain. He wrote about hope, freedom from oppression, and the possibility of a better future. His ideas also went to revolutionary themes and revenge for the murdered. Siamanto had two sides to his writing: one of lamentation, and the other of resistance. It is from this ideology of resistance that his revolutionary beliefs grew. He was convinced that the road to salvation for his people was through armed struggle. He was hoping to ignite the revolutionary spirit in the younger generation of Armenians and to make them

understand that indifference and inaction was not going to save them. He was so gripped with these troubles that he seldom wrote about himself, his personal life, love, or joy.

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1. THE SONG OF THE KNIGHT

THE sun is up, the hour has come for starting, O my steed!
A moment wait till I pass my foot through thy stirrup
glittering clear.

I read my Aim in thy shining eyes, that know and understand.
Oh, joy of joys! Oh, blest be thou, my steed, my steed so
dear!

My body still is firm and light with the joy and spring of
youth,
And on thy saddle I shall perch like an eagle, proud and free.

The golden oats that I gave to thee in plenty, O my steed!
Have made mad life through thy form flame up; how fleet
thy course will be!

Galloping thou wilt fly along, fly ever upon thy way,
And sparks from the strokes of thy brazen shoes will blossom
as we go past.
Let us grow drunk with our rapid course like heroes, O my
steed!

And, infinitely wing'ed like the wind, drink in the blast!

The boundless space before thy pace recedes and disappears,
The sinful cities with all their crimes bow down beneath thy
tread.

Black flocks of crows that tremble thy swiftness to behold
Are seeking shelter in the clouds, the thick clouds overhead.

The sad earth seems below us and we up among the stars;
Thou no abyss nor downward slope dost heed, with eyes
aflake;

There is no obstacle, no rock that can thy flight impede;
Impatient, fain wouldst thou attain the summit of the Aim.

My fleet, fleet steed! My idol of snow-white marble fair!
With all my soul I worship thee! As on our course we fly,
My dreamy brow is burning with the flames of mine Ideal;
Oh, spur me onward to my Aim! Slave of thy footsteps I!

I am the slave of thy fleet steps, child of the hurricane!
Speed on, athirst for vengeance, O swift, swift steed of mine!
A needless halt I spurn and hate, with all my anger's might.
Ours are the summits, and the wreath of victory is thine!

Thy delicate cream-white body boils with thine ardent fire
of life;

Thy tail is a cataract; rushing down, like a hurricane it blows.
Within thine eyes, so bright and keen, there shine two flaming
stars;

The ring of thy swift shoes forges fear, as onward our journey goes.

I told thee that I am thy slave, for liberty athirst.

Oh, bear me swiftly toward the South, away from this frontier!

We shall be clothed with suns and blood, beyond the stately heights

Of Ararat and Aragatz. Speed on, my courser dear!

I hold no whip within my hand, my courser, thou art free;

Upon thy back, that glistens like a lily white and fair,

I only shed sweet touches of my fingers as we go.

They touch thy bright flesh like a stream of honey dropping there.

Thou hast no bridle upon thy neck, no bit within thy mouth;
Enough for me one wave of hair from thy full mane backward flung,

I have no need of stirrup-irons for my feet to grip thy sides;
A silver saddle thou hast alone, a saddle with pearls bestrung.

For my native valleys I yearn, I yearn, the valleys that hold my home,

But halt thou never, my courser swift, the star-strewn heavens below!

Away by the mouths of caverns deep like a shadow thou must pass,

From forests, vineyards and gardens green still farther and

farther go.

Who knows, perchance a maiden fair by the side of a running
brook

Might hand me a cluster of golden grapes, and proffer a
draught of wine;

My soul might understand her, and she like a sister smile on
me —

But I do not wish to be lost in dreams; halt not, swift steed
of mine I

Thou wilt pass by the shadowy bowers of my birthplace,
Eden-fair;

The nightingale, the nightingale, fain would I drink her song!
The rose-scent, on my pilgrimage, I have dreamed of many
a year.

Oh, how my heart is yearning! But halt not, speed along.

And in my pathway haply old corpses might arise,
Their shrouds upon their shoulders, their hands held out to
me,

Approach me – me the wretched! – and breathe upward to
mine ear

Their loves and vengeance ne'er to be forgot – but onward
flee!

I shudder at the ruins and at barren, helpless pangs.

My courser, near the ashes of the cities make no stay!

Oh, tears, the tears of others, they choke me without ruth;

The woe, the griefs of others drive me mad, upon my way!

Oh, do not halt, my courser, where these corpses scattered lie!

Fly far away from graveyards, where white shades of dead men be.

I cannot bear, I tell thee, I cannot bear again

The death of my dear native land with anguished eyes to see!

Behold the landscape of the place in which I had my birth!

At sight of it my longing glance with tears grows moist and glows.

But yet I would not shed them; nay, do not pause or stay,

My steed, my steed of swiftest flight! My Aim no weakness knows.

Lo! 'tis Euphrates sounding. Why, river, dost thou roar?

Thy son is passing. Why so dark the flood thy shore that laves?

I am thy son. Oh, do not rage! Hast thou forgotten me?

I with thy current would speed on, and would outstrip thy waves.

The memory of my childhood draws from me tears of blood;

A dreamy youth who used to stray along these banks of thine,

All full of hope, with sunlight mad, and happy with his dreams —

But ah! what am I saying? Pause not, swift steed of mine!

Behold the glorious autumn, which vaguely dies around!
Upon my brow a yellow leaf has fallen like a dream.
Is it my death it stands for, or the crowning of my faith?
What matter? On, my neighing steed, sweep onward with the
stream!

Perchance it was the last sere leaf of my ill-omened fate
That fell upon us even now. What matter? Speed away!
From the four corners of the land are echoing the words,
“Ideal, O free-born Ideal, halt not, halt not nor stay!”

I worship thee! Now like a star thou shootest on thy course;
Thou art as fleet, thou art as free, as is the lightning's flame;
And through the wind and with the wind like eagles now we
soar.

I am thy knight, I am thy slave; oh, lift me to my Aim!

Down from the summits of the rocks, the dread and cloudy
peaks,
The cataracts, the cataracts are falling in their might!
Their currents white are pure, my steed, as thine own snow-
white form,
And their imperious downward sweep is savage as thy flight.

But why now doth a shudder through all thy body run?
Oh, what has chanced, my hero? Why do thy looks grow
dark?
Oh, turn thine eyes away from me, thine eyes with trouble
filled;

Past the horizons fly along, fly like a wind-borne bark!

I heard the wailing and the cries, entreaties and laments,

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